

Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to Dr C. J. Brown of the Namibian Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Windhoek, for kindly drawing my notice to the important work on melanistic tits recently carried out by him and members of his Namibian Bird Atlas Project team and for furnishing supportive range maps and data arising from their joint field research in Namibia.

References:

- Benson, C. W., Brooke, R. K., Dowsett, R. J. & Irwin, M. P. S. 1971. *The Birds of Zambia*. Collins.
- Clancey, P. A. 1958. Taxonomic notes on two southern African species of Paridae. *Ibis* 100: 451–453.
- Clancey, P. A. 1964. Subspeciation in the Black Tit *Parus niger* Vieillot. *Durban Mus. Novit.* 7: 167–173.
- Clancey, P. A. 1972. The status of *Parus niger carpi* Macdonald & Hall, and a regrouping of some populations of the *Parus niger* Vieillot, *sens. strict.* complex. *Durban Mus. Novit.* 9: 236–244.
- Clancey, P. A. 1985. *The Rare Birds of Southern Africa*. Winchester Press, Johannesburg.
- Clancey, P. A. (ed.) 1980. *S.A.O.S. Checklist of Southern African Birds*. Southern African Ornithological Society, Johannesburg.
- Dowsett, R. J. & Dowsett-Lemaire, F. 1993. Comments on the taxonomy of some Afrotropical bird species. *Tauraco Research Report* 5: 367–369, Fig. 10.
- Eck, S. 1988. Gesichtspunkte zur Art-Systematik der Meisen (Paridae) (Aves). *Zool. Abhandl. Staat. Mus. Tierk. Dresden* 43: 101–134.
- Macdonald, J. D. & Hall, B. P. 1957. Ornithological results of the Bernard Carp/Transvaal Museum expedition to the Kaokoveld, 1951. *Ann. Transv. Mus.* 23: 1–39.
- Snow, D. W. 1967. Family Paridae in Peters' *Check-List of Birds of the World*. Vol. 12. Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard.
- Winterbottom, J. M. 1971. *A Preliminary Check List of the Birds of South West Africa*. South West African Scientific Society, Windhoek.

Address: Dr P. A. Clancey, Research Associate, Durban Natural Science Museum, P.O. Box 4085, Durban 4000, South Africa.

© British Ornithologists' Club 1995

IN BRIEF

ADDITIONAL RECORDS OF RANGE EXTENSION IN THE HOUSE CROW *CORVUS SPLENDENS*

Further to the review of the distribution of the House Crow *Corvus splendens* published recently in this journal (Ryall 1994), other supplementary reports have now come to light and are presented below.

Europe

Netherlands

Two House Crows were discovered at Hoek van Holland on 10 April 1994 and at least one was still present in late May 1995. They feed primarily on leftovers from several fish restaurants but also forage around the piers of the adjacent waterway, the Nieuwe Waterweg, which they have crossed on at least one occasion (G. Steinhaus). They often associate with Jackdaws *C. monedula* when feeding and roosting in tall trees in the area.

The closeness of this site to a major shipping route and port suggests their arrival on board a ship. At least one of the birds appears to be a juvenile and probably of the nominate race (pers. obs.), judging from a photograph published in *Dutch Birding* 16(4).

Middle East

Qatar

House Crows have recently been seen in Qatar (F. E. Warr), presumably having spread from the neighbouring territories where the species is well established.

Africa

Republic of South Africa

A pair of birds and two single birds were seen at Cape Flats, Cape Town, in December 1989 and January 1990, respectively (Watt-Pringle 1990).

The Americas

U.S.A.

The first reported sighting of a House Crow in North America was of a single bird seen in New Jersey in June 1971 (Gill 1985). It was suspected as having arrived aboard a ship.

Nugent (1984) saw a House Crow at Mount Pleasant near Charleston, South Carolina, in October 1984. He recalled that one was seen to fly ashore from an Indian cargo vessel in Charleston Harbour in September 1974, and that another, presumably the same bird, was seen at nearby Mount Pleasant shortly afterwards. A series of further sightings were made in the area over the following 2 years (Post *et al.* 1988) and the authors speculated that all these records involved a single bird, despite the time span of 12 years.

Chile

There has been an unconfirmed report by a Chilean ornithologist of two birds closely resembling House Crows in the port of Punta Arenas, where they have stayed through the austral summer of 1993/4 (S. Madge).

These supplementary records for the Middle East and southern Africa reflect expansions of populations already well established in the region. The records on the east coast of the U.S.A., and most probably in Chile, represent long distance extensions of the House Crow's range.

I would like to thank G. Steinhaus, F. E. Warr and S. Madge for providing recent information on the species.

References:

- Gill, F. B. 1985. Mystery crow in New Jersey [Letter to Editor]. *Birding* 17: 188–190.
Nugent, P. 1984. Observations. *Lesser Squawk* 35: 4.

- Post, W., Nugent, P. & Elliot, W. W. 1988. Indian house crow in Charleston County, S.C.: Second sighting for North America. *The Chat* 52: 38–39.
- Ryall, C. 1994. Recent extensions of range in the House Crow *Corvus splendens*. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 114: 90–100.
- Watt-Pringle, S. 1990. House crows in Cape Flats. *Promerops* 192: 8.

Farnborough College of Technology,
Boundary Road,
Farnborough,
Hampshire GU14 6SB,
U.K.

COLIN RYALL

15 July 1994

FIRST RECORD OF THE NORTHERN GIANT PETREL *MACRONECTES*
HALLI FOR BRAZILIAN WATERS

The Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli* is found in the southern seas, from 55 to 25°S, commonly north of the Antarctic Convergence, but occasionally reaching 15°S in cold water zones (Harrison 1987). In eastern South America the species now breeds in South Georgia, being found along the coast up to Uruguay (Harrison 1985, Sick 1993). Specimens of *Macronectes* positively identified in Brazilian waters have all been found to belong to the sibling species *M. giganteus*, which is fairly commonly recorded during the winter (from July to late September) from Rio Grande do Sul to Rio de Janeiro (Belton 1984, Vooren & Fernandes 1989, Moraes & Krull 1993, Sick 1993, Olmos *et al.* 1995), with a summer record from São Paulo (Olmos *et al.* 1995).

On 27 September 1994 an immature bird, with plumage agreeing with the second stage juvenile of Harrison (1985), was found dead on the beach at Ilha Comprida (c. 24°50'S, 47°45'W), southern coast of São Paulo state. The bird was very fresh, but had already been attacked by Turkey Vultures *Cathartes aura*, which had removed all viscera and most muscle. Measures of the fresh bird were: bill 105, wing 510, tail 157 and tarsus 105 mm. The rosy bill showed the diagnostic reddish point in both maxillae. The prepared skin is now at the Museu de Zoologia of the Universidade de São Paulo (MZUSP).

During the previous two days of the finding, strong winds from southeast blew along the entire state coast, bringing many dead and dying seabirds and cetaceans. Along the 70 km-long beach of Ilha Comprida we also found five Manx Shearwaters *Puffinus puffinus*, eight Brown Boobies *Sula leucogaster*, one Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchus*, three White-chinned Petrels *Procellaria aequinoctialis*, one (live) South Polar Skua *Catharacta maccormicki* and one (live) Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*. A Rough-toothed Dolphin *Steno bredanensis* had also stranded. The impact of such strong winds on seabirds in southeastern Brazil has been discussed by Olmos *et al.* (1995).

Compared to *Macronectes giganteus*, *M. halli* is considered to be more sedentary (Harrison 1983), which may account for its rareness in Brazilian waters. Nevertheless observation cruises off the Brazilian coast have been too few to make safe assessments about the status of Antarctic and Sub-Antarctic migrants there.